



Tourism Advisory Board

March 13, 2025 9:30 am

Caucus Room, City Hall, 1st Floor

9:30 am Call to order, approval of past meeting minutes

9:35 am Mary Baldwin Students Presentation

9:50 am Samantha Johnson – Monthly Tourism Report

10:00 am Sector Reports

- **Lodging**
- **Restaurants**
- **Retail**
- **Attractions/Arts**

10:15 am Staunton Shout-Outs

10:20 am Old Business

10:25 am New Business

10:30 am Adjourn

TAB Notes From Samantha in Lieu of TAB Minutes as Meeting was Cancelled on 2-11-25



January 2025
Monthly Report.pdf

Happy Friday & Valentine's Day!

While we unfortunately could not gather this month, we wanted to share some noteworthy updates and announcements. We were happy to see that December saw an 8.3% increase in hotel occupancy over last year and 11.1% increase in RevPar over 2023. Additionally, you can take a look at January's activity report for our department. We are gearing up for March to be a busy month for meetings and retreats in Staunton. On March 3-4, we're excited to welcome 40 staff members of Virginia Tourism's marketing, communications, and research teams for their first ever joint retreat. What an exciting opportunity for us to give a warm welcome to those that craft the stories, marketing, and messaging of the commonwealth. In town, you will also see 100+ attendees of the Rotary conference on March 6-8 and similar numbers on March 20-21 for the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Executive Conference. March 7-8 will also see the return of the Valley Women's Weekend! See below how you can get involved (we hope you do!). We are going to start putting together a coupon card to include in swag bags for meetings/conferences/events like this. Darren or myself will be reaching out soon to businesses. If you wish to offer a discount or incentive (think 10% off, free appetizer with purchase of a meal, etc), we would love to include you. Deals will be offered for 4-6 months at a time. As always, stay up to date with events happening in our community on our [calendar](#) page or [Staunton on Tap](#). If you do not see your event listed, please submit that [here](#).

Sector Reports:

Post holidays, January saw a decrease in spending across all sectors but an increase from year over year. Some businesses found benefit in adjusting their seasonal hours of operations. Many retail spaces also attribute their success to the competitive pricing found in Staunton over Nova/DC markets and the opportunity many offer for immersive in-space experiences, which continues to be a leading visitor market for us.

*Shoutout to WWPL, who in January saw visitation from 25 states and 4 international countries.

*Blackburn Inn will soon be offering much requested tours of their abandoned building starting in March!

*Lookout for the grand opening event coming soon for Queen City Music Studios!

*Heifetz summer enrollment is now open. Make plans to enjoy the Bach Around the Clock event on March 22nd

Topics from Visit Staunton:

-Several [VTC Grants](#) are now live until March 13th including the Marketing Leverage Program

-In the coming weeks, we will be launching the new, limited-series **podcast**, The U is Silent; We Aren't. More to come on that soon, but we hope to find your support. We're very excited! Additionally, we will soon be rolling out our refreshed **newsletter** (Gretchen and Jessica have been hard at work perfecting this!) along with some additional secret projects and events to come.

-We are keeping a close watch on shifts to the **international market**. At this time, VTC is pausing some scheduled international pr/sales missions planning on attending, Canada mainly. Unfortunately, weather postponed the planned international meeting with VTC until March. In the meantime, if you interact with international guests, PLEASE keep us updated on what you're seeing and hearing! Are you seeing an increase/decrease in visitation, what is the visitor sentiment like, where are they traveling from? Your insight will greatly impact how we proceed.

Valley's Women Weekend Info:

There are a few ways to get involved with Valley Women Collab over the next few weeks. They are hosting a casual Galentine's Social at Ramulose Ridge Tasting Room on **Monday, February 17th** with networking, DIY craft station, and wine tasting and snacks available for purchase. A great way to learn more about VWC and to support a local business during this season!

Valley Women's Weekend is the pinnacle programming weekend happening **March 7th and 8th**. This is our 3rd year of highlighting and amplifying women-owned businesses and creatives in the region. We are hosting a keynote panel kick-off event at Hotel 24 South from 5-7pm and are encouraging attendees to continue the fun at local restaurants and bars after the event. **If local food & bev want to get involved** you can offer discount cards, specials, themed drinks, etc. for the weekend and we will put your promo cards in the swag bags attendees are getting, which will encourage them to come to YOU after the event has concluded.

On **Saturday, March 8th** local businesses and restaurants are encouraged to lean into the theme using their own creativity. Ideas include: hosting themed trivia, female musicians, a pop-up artist or women-creatives, offering BOGO specials for attendees - the sky's the limit! **Valley Women Collab is not responsible for hosting or coordinating activities at your business but will help share the word and highlight what your individual business decides to do.** Please tag and share your events so we can help cross promote on social media **@ValleyWomenCollab**

If anyone has additional questions, please reach out to:

Megan Burrows: burrowsmeganc@gmail.com

Breanna Decker: juniperlaneva@gmail.com

Joa Garcia: joa@prismconsultingva.com

Thank you all for being great partners! As always, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or ideas. We're excited to come together again on March 13th. Students from MBU will be joining us to share an exciting project we are collaborating on.

Samantha Johnson

Tourism Director, Visit Staunton

Staunton, VA

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Current Album on Repeat: Reverie by Magnolia Boulevard